

GREEN NEWS

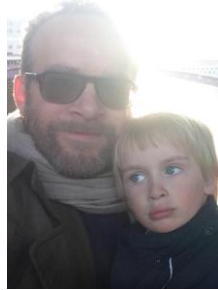
NORTH WALWORTH



Peter Baffoe



Adriana Hoyos Rojas



Guy Mannes-Abbott

ELEPHANT & CASTLE: SOUTHWARK COUNCIL MUST MAKE DEVELOPERS PAY FOR FAIRER DEAL

Offshore corporation won't trim £153m profit for affordable homes

In December, property developers Delancey put in an application to **demolish Elephant & Castle Shopping Centre** and London College of Communication. Councillors on Southwark Council's Planning Committee refused to approve the plan, yet **accommodated an eleventh-hour promise** from Delancey to make an improved offer. This means the committee will **hear the proposal again** this month.

Meanwhile, the Shopping Centre is being run down, conveniently bolstering the claimed 'need' for demolition. Yet the building is structurally sound and could be imaginatively refurbished, re-landscaped and re-clad. This option would avoid **nine years of environmental destruction**, intense construction noise, **degraded local shopping and leisure facilities**, and **shocking disruption to nearby residents'** home delivery access.

However with Labour-Lib Dem consensus to rebuild the site including new flats, the local community continues to demand **35% of new flats must be affordable**, half of those at **genuine social rent**. Delancey now claims it can **only afford to improve its paltry affordable housing offer if the taxpayer pays**, and is **further backpedalling** on small improvements. Delancey, based in the Virgin Islands (an alleged tax haven), is projected to make a **profit of £153 million** on the scheme. The community has **criticised Southwark Council for not standing up to Delancey's claims of how much profit it must make** for a "viable" scheme, and even **fighting to keep secret** Delancey's own "viability assessment".



Guy and Adriana attending the planning hearing

Writer and North Walworth resident Guy Mannes-Abbott said: **"What is the point of having a Labour council and a Labour mayor of London contorting themselves to enable this? What community facilities could be saved by trimming just 3%, or 10%, of the profits?"**

Adriana: Lack of leadership is hurting traders and Latin community

Diverse small traders facing displacement in Elephant & Castle regeneration are **having their livelihoods damaged** by Southwark Council indifference. Huge uncertainty about future premises means they are getting **turned down for business loans**. With short-term leases and declining footfall, some **businesses are being forced towards leaving the area** now. Southwark Council has offered no concessions to business rates of affected traders.



Adriana representing local traders at the planning hearing

Elephant-based lawyer Adriana Hoyos Rojas, who represented the Latin community in Elephant traders' deputation to the council, said: "We've not been told cost, size or lifespan of replacement units. **Traders have no information** about notice to vacate. Legal advice offered to traders is not independent. **Southwark Council's job is to look after the needs of local residents and businesses**. It must take a strong negotiation approach with the profit-seeking developers. Delancey have been reluctant to make space for either the Latin American community or bingo. It seems **agents selling penthouses don't want the diverse faces of our local community**."

"Local councillors are claiming credit for vague, small improvements to Delancey's offer. But before the hearing **we hadn't seen them for two or three years**. In the local elections on May 3rd **we need to change our local councillors and elect people who will actually listen** to the needs of Elephant traders and shoppers." • [More at www.southwarkgreenparty.org.uk/elephant](http://www.southwarkgreenparty.org.uk/elephant)

WALWORTH'S AIR IS ILLEGAL

Greens publish disturbing local nitrogen dioxide readings

Walworth's air contains levels of a harmful pollutant which **greatly exceed European and World Health Organisation standards**, shows new research by Southwark Green Party. Laboratory analysis of air samples taken last autumn found **nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) levels at Bricklayers Arms** (where New Kent Road, Old Kent Road and Tower Bridge Road meet) were **nearly double the EU limit**. Studies have shown that excessive NO₂ **worsens shortness of breath, coughing and lung inflammation**, particularly for people with **asthma**.

Guy Mannes-Abbott said: "These **shocking figures** are not a freakish spike but consistent with NO₂ levels along the New Kent Road and Walworth Road **routinely double EU and UK target levels**. These are also the busiest roads in Southwark, along with Tower Bridge Road and Old Kent Road, carrying 30,000 vehicles a day and overwhelming our densely populated neighbourhood. These roads are **not part of the Mayor's proposed Ultra Low Emissions Zone (ULEZ)** nor the new Low Emission Bus Zones, despite **diesel buses being the prime culprits** and the Elephant & Castle being a hub for so many. We need a **Right to Clean Air to tackle this crisis** quickly and comprehensively."

SOUTHWARK LABOUR MISSES COUNCIL HOMEBUILDING PROMISE

1,500 new council homes promised by 2018, only 400 to be built

After the 2014 local elections, **Southwark's Labour-run council promised they would build 1,500 new council homes** by the end of 2018. Now the lead councillor for new homes has admitted "we will **not be meeting this target**".

Only **400 new homes will have been built**. Southwark Labour's 2014 manifesto had promised 11,000 new homes, but didn't say how long it would take. It has since emerged that the Council's homebuilding targets stretch to the year 2043 – **25 years away** from now.

Local Green activist Peter Baffoe said: "The many local residents waiting for council housing often have no choice but to be living in **really sub-standard private rented accommodation**, that's often also **shockingly overpriced**. In my job as a community development worker, I regularly see the **desperate local need for many more council homes**. We also need to see **more action from Southwark Council** and the Mayor of London on **regulating quality in the private rented market**."



Peter: Standing up for new council homes

Green member of the London Assembly Sian Berry is working to **provide more protection for private renters**. See www.sianberry.london/rents-map-london/

"OPPORTUNITY FOR CHANGE": OPPORTUNITY FOR WHOM?

Writer Guy Mannes-Abbott on local "regeneration"



Demolition of the Heygate Estate

(photo: Guy Mannes-Abbott)

We all know the answer to "Opportunity for Whom?" **Disregard for existing communities** has been the keynote of the Elephant & Castle Opportunity Area. The Mayor's new London Plan has big ambitions, in particular the target of 65,000 new homes a year, delivered mainly through additional Opportunity Areas across the city. But **they will fail unless London stops ignoring or actively displacing existing communities** in so-called regenerations, and instead puts them first. A formal recognition of Existing Communities would include **a Right to Community**, with clear definitions of community and a set of subsidiary rights, including to **clean air**.

This is an opportunity for change: combining big principles, clear entitlements, and a guerilla localism to **bring the benefits of development home**.

CAN WE HELP?

If you have a comment or query about our area, Peter, Adriana and Guy would love to hear from you.

Email: walworth@southwark.greenparty.org.uk **Website:** www.southwarkgreenparty.org.uk/walworth

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Want to meet? We're happy to arrange a time. **Become a Green Party member today – join.greenparty.org.uk**

GREENS: PRINCIPLED LOCAL ACTIVISTS, WORKING FOR WALWORTH